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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 3 October 1991, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia)

later: Mr. MIN (Myanmar)
(Vice-President)

- Address by Mr. Amos C. Sawyer, President of the Interim Government of National Unity of the Republic of Liberia

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements by

Mr. Booh-Booh (Cameroon)
Mr. Vulkov (Bulgaria)
Mr. Filali (Morocco)
Mr. Essy (Côte d'Ivoire)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. AMOS C. SAWYER, PRESIDENT OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Interim Government of National Unity of the Republic of Liberia.

Mr. Amos C. Sawyer, President of the Interim Government of National Unity of the Republic of Liberia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Interim Government of National Unity of the Republic of Liberia, His Excellency Mr. Amos Sawyer, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President SAWYER: It is indeed for me a great honour and privilege to address the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. This occasion not only presents the first opportunity for me to address this world body in my capacity as the Interim President of the Republic of Liberia, but even more important, it also affords me a special opportunity to discuss the all-important issues of peace and stability the world over, and in the case of Liberia the current efforts towards the institution of genuine pluralistic democracy.

Before doing so, I extend my sincerest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the current session of the General Assembly. We are confident that, under your able leadership, the deliberations on issues assigned to this session will be carried out with diplomatic finesse and dispatch. As you undertake this arduous task, let me

(President Sawyer)

assure you that the Liberian delegation will lend every support to ensure that our collective efforts meet with success.

I should also like to register our appreciation to your illustrious predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco of Malta, for the efficient and statesmanlike manner in which he conducted the affairs of the forty-fifth session of the Assembly. We wish him well in his future undertakings.

(President Sawyer)

It is fitting to express special gratitude to the Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose tenure has seen the United Nations as an organization come into its own and exhibit unprecedented effectiveness in recent years. We salute the Secretary-General for his efforts in the search for global peace and his concern for the less fortunate of this world. His advocacy of fairness and justice has rekindled mankind's assurance that the United Nations is the appropriate forum capable of meeting the ever-changing challenges of our world.

Recently the United Nations took on a more universal character when seven States were admitted to membership in the Organization. The Liberian delegation welcomes most heartily in our midst Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and looks forward to their active involvement in the affairs of the United Nations.

At a time when the world is rapidly changing and the political polarities which characterized the past four and a half decades are fast crumbling, it is expected, and rightly so, that countries like mine, which are Charter Members of the United Nations, offer an appreciation of these events, especially in the light of the expectations of a new world order as envisaged at the time of the San Francisco Conference. Liberia bears a responsibility at this time to make a pronouncement on how far Africa has progressed and fared in relation to the aims of this new world arrangement that will be based on equity, justice and fair play. Regrettably, the situation in which we find ourselves today leaves us no such opportunity, other than to give members an overview of recent developments in our country.

(President Sawyer)

We Liberians are embarrassed by the fact that we have used up so much of the time, resources and energy of our West African subregion on a fratricidal conflict. We permitted ourselves to degenerate to a stage where we not only became the problem-child but posed a serious threat to the nations of that region. As I speak to you today more than 800,000 of our people, constituting approximately 30 per cent of our population, are refugees in neighbouring countries. Worse still, from our territory an invasion was launched into Sierra Leone, thereby paying the people of that friendly country who have done all within their power to care for Liberian refugees, with ingratitude for their sacrifices and hospitality. We condemn the invasion of Sierra Leone and we stand in full solidarity with the government and people of that brotherly country in resisting this aggression.

It has been stated and demonstrated so many times that peace is a necessary precondition for development and security. The prosperity that is exhibited in certain parts of the world could be largely attributed to the fact that peace has reigned in those countries for a considerable length of time, thereby making possible the technological, social, economic and political progress which their populations today enjoy.

Our concept of peace is based upon our abiding belief in the protection and promotion of human rights. By this we mean we believe in the integrity of the human person, the right freely to choose those who govern us, the right freely to participate in the decision-making process affecting our destiny and the right of due process.

The momentous changes that are taking place in various parts of the world are motivated by the desire of the peoples of these countries to enshrine in their laws the enjoyment of these rights. These are the fundamentals for peace.

(President Sawyer)

It is for these reasons that the Interim Government of National Unity is totally committed to the protection and promotion of human rights and condemns the violation of those rights wherever they may occur. Liberia needs peace - peace based on these fundamentals!

In the light of this conviction the Interim Government of National Unity reaffirms its commitment to the holding of free and fair general and presidential elections under international supervision in its effort to restore peace in Liberia. It is heartening to note that this effort is largely being supported by our brothers and sisters in the West African subregion.

For more than a year now, the leaders of our subregional organization have been preoccupied with the Liberian conflict. There have been many halting steps and diversions along the way. None the less, we have made solid progress since we addressed members at the forty-fifth session.

For the first time in our crisis, all sides seem convinced that we have now entered on the final stretch of the journey to a lasting settlement. For this, we are truly grateful to the members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), especially those whose troops make up the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). It was that Group, operating as a peace-keeping force, that put an end to the carnage and destruction that was going on in Liberia.

We salute the Governments and peoples of the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone for responding with dispatch to the call for the establishment of the peace-monitoring force ECOMOG. We also salute the Governments and peoples of Mali and now Senegal for further strengthening ECOMOG.

(President Sawyer)

We must say without equivocation that our nation would have perished were it not for the wise and timely decisions of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee. It is gratifying to note that this particular arrangement of regional assistance is "home grown" and is now increasingly being emulated and adapted by others. We say, Why not? When the expenditure on national defence is set against the need for economic development, the reasonableness of a collective regional defence becomes overwhelming. It is for this reason, among others, that the Republic of Liberia supports the call for the establishment of regional defence organs: ECOMOG is a good start.

It is pertinent to mention at this point the undue burden which the countries that contribute to ECOMOG are shouldering in their peace-keeping operations in Liberia. We note with satisfaction the recent announcement of assistance by the United States Government to some members of ECOWAS in relation to their peace-keeping role in Liberia.

(President Sawyer)

We consider this encouraging, especially in the light of the assurance that further assistance to these countries will be forthcoming. We urgently appeal to all nations, especially the industrialized countries, to emulate this example and to offer substantial assistance to the countries that are at present engaged in the peace-keeping effort in Liberia.

When the history of our conflict is written, the most gratifying aspect will be the revelation that one of the most fratricidal conflicts in Africa will have been resolved almost entirely by the Governments and peoples of our subregion. In this respect, the men and women of ECOMOG whose blood has been shed for their brothers and sisters in Liberia will leave a lasting mark in the annals of our history. Fully recognizing the enormous sacrifices and indispensable contributions of the men and women of ECOMOG, Liberians everywhere will continue to say, "Thank God for ECOMOG!"

We cannot conclude these remarks without lauding the Governments and peoples of a number of countries who, through various charitable organizations, demonstrated genuine concern for humanity by giving needed assistance to hapless civilians during the Liberian civil conflict. These organizations - Action internationale contre la faim and Médecins sans frontières of France; Catholic Relief Services, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, Church World Service, Community of Caring, Plan International, World Vision, Adventist Development Relief Association and Baptist Relief of the United States of America; OXFAM, Save the Children Fund and Caritas of the United Kingdom; Concern and GOAL of Ireland; German Emergency Doctors; the International Committee of the Red Cross and Lutheran World Services of Switzerland; Médecins sans frontières of Belgium; Médecins sans frontières of Holland; the Swedish Relief Corporation of Sweden and the

(President Sawyer)

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee of Canada - will for ever be remembered by the Liberian people.

Last year in this Hall the international community acknowledged the importance of putting the world's children high on the development agenda and committed itself to giving them a "first call". As the hardest-hit victims of our civil strife, the Liberian children are our "first call". The Interim Government of National Unity has embarked on several projects to address the plight of Liberian children.

We must tell you that our hearts have been touched by the great generosity and good will of the peoples and Governments of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Republic of the Gambia, the United States of America and the European Economic Community. The peoples of those countries, in addition to all that they have done for the Liberian people, have made separate generous donations of food and medicines to Liberians.

Nor can Liberians forget the kindness of the peoples of the Republics of Guinea, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, the Gambia and other countries of our subregion, who have played and continue to play host to our citizens.

We want also, on behalf of the people of Liberia, to extend our gratitude and appreciation to the United Nations and its specialized agencies for their contributions in providing humanitarian aid to our people.

It is with much satisfaction that I inform you that Liberians have at long last reached a consensus on a strategy for settling the Liberian conflict. The strategy to which we have all committed ourselves is that of holding free and fair elections under international supervision. A necessary precondition for the holding of these elections is the creation of adequate security arrangements throughout the country.

(President Sawyer)

In this regard the agreement reached in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, on 17 September 1991 is most encouraging. At that meeting Liberians manifested both the will and the resolve to succeed in this election enterprise by agreeing to encamp and disarm all forces under the supervision of an expanded ECOMOG - the Ceasefire Monitoring Group of the Economic Commission of West African States.

As a follow-up to the conclusions reached at that meeting Liberians have since held consultative meetings among themselves and have announced the members of both an elections commission, and an ad hoc supreme court for the country. The establishment of an elections commission is a significant milestone on the road to peace. It is intended to be an independent body free from government policies and influence. As a country with limited experience in the conduct of free and fair elections, Liberia hereby requests the international community to provide adequate technical and financial assistance for the electoral process.

Further to our efforts to ensure the credibility of the electoral process we have invited the International Negotiation Network (INN), headed by former United States President Jimmy Carter, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Economic Community of West African States, the United Nations, the Republican Institute for International Affairs and the National Democratic Institute, both of the United States of America, and other relevant organizations to supervise and monitor the forthcoming elections.

Our yearnings for peace, security and democracy will remain expressions of fine words and sentiments if the present economic conditions in which all of us in Africa find ourselves were to continue. The combination of our debt burden, commodity prices, fluctuating exchange rates and the instability built

(President Sawyer)

into our respective systems by the weakness of our political institutions make it mandatory that the developed countries and the international system take a more realistic view of our problems. In the case of Liberia, the protracted civil conflict has compounded our plight even further.

We maintain the view that democracy and political pluralism cannot be sustained on an empty stomach. We therefore appeal to the United Nations, its agencies, the international community, and especially the international financial institutions to re-examine their attitudes towards the developing countries.

Liberia is faced with serious economic problems. My country has a debt burden of over $US 3 billion; its infrastructure and social services are in ruins. As a result of our pre-civil-conflict economic situation our ability to generate funds is impaired. We appeal to our friends to reconsider such impediments in order to allow us to tackle in a meaningful way the arduous problems of repatriation, resettlement and rehabilitation of our nationals scattered all over the world as refugees.

International assistance becomes even more justified in view of the policy-reform programmes that Liberia has now undertaken. We seek to create the capacity of the democratically elected successor of the Interim Government to undertake reconstruction and stimulate socio-economic growth and development. We also seek to ensure efficiency and fairness in resource allocation, promote accountability and alleviate rural poverty. These policy-reform measures, in our view, constitute the steps necessary to attract the international assistance directly required to support programmes of reconstruction and assure the future growth of our economy.

(President Sawyer)

The Interim Government of National Unity seeks the cooperation of the international community to the fullest extent in reaching some understanding with respect to the critical problems resulting from the civil conflict and in laying the groundwork for self-sustained economic development in the years ahead.

(President Sawyer)

Meanwhile, Liberians look with great anticipation to the United Nations and the international community as a whole for continuation, for a reasonable period, of the humanitarian-assistance programme that they have provided during our difficult period.

Although we are preoccupied with our domestic situation, we are not unmindful of those issues that continue to claim the attention of the international community.

On the African continent, Liberia welcomes the ongoing negotiations between the South African Government and the African National Congress. It is our hope that the hurdles preventing an early agreement acceptable to the parties will be removed so that all South Africans may freely participate in the affairs of their country on the basis of the principle of one person, one vote.

We are heartened by the progress being made with regard to Cambodia, El Salvador, the Western Sahara and Cyprus, owing to the willingness of the parties to reach accommodation. We hope that that willingness will eventually bear fruit.

We are alarmed by the recent developments in Haiti. We stand in solidarity with the elected Government and people of Haiti in their efforts to prevent the reversal of the democratic process there.

The United Nations was founded on the basis of the high ideals of justice, peace and security. We must maintain those ideals if we are to bequeath to succeeding generations a more humane society. Such a society cannot flourish on greed, lust for power, and the flagrant abuse of human rights. Our appeal goes to the whole of humanity.

While it is not easy to soothe the pains and shrug off the bitter memories of a protracted civil conflict - the worst in our history - Liberians

(President Sawyer)

must now muster the courage to move ahead, healing the wounds that have been inflicted upon ourselves, and act in concert with the rest of the world to uphold the noble ideals for which the United Nations was established - always remembering that "In union, strong success is sure; we cannot fail."

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Interim Government of National Unity of the Republic of Liberia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Amos C. Sawyer, President of the Interim Government of National Unity of the Republic of Liberia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I wish to draw attention to the fact that, for the past few days, morning and afternoon meetings have begun with not more than one third of the members present. This is a vicious circle. If insufficient members are present, the first speaker scheduled on the list is hesitant to begin his statement and may himself, in the circumstances, not arrive on time. So I appeal to members to be punctual. I should not really give advice to delegations about the arrangement of their work; that is their business. However, each delegation should ensure that it has at least one representative present at the time set for the beginning of each meeting, thus giving our work its full significance. I shall be grateful if all delegations observe this arrangement.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. BOOH-BOOH (Cameroon) (interpretation from French): Cameroon associates itself warmly with the congratulations that have been expressed to you, Sir, on the occasion of your outstanding election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. As well as being a tribute

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

to your country - the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a founding Member of the United Nations, with which we are pleased to have long-standing and fruitful relations - your election is evidence of the esteem and respect that your outstanding qualities have won you in the United Nations.

Your predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco of Malta, demonstrated his talents during the grave events that recently disturbed international peace and security. We are grateful and express our full appreciation to him.

This is an excellent opportunity to welcome warmly the bold and innovative initiatives of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, in the pursuit of international peace and cooperation, as reflected in the renewed authority and prestige of the United Nations. In this context, it is particularly fortunate that our Organization is welcoming new Members. Cameroon wishes to extend its congratulations to the Republic of Korea and the People's Democratic Republic of Korea on their admission. This is a significant step forward, which will certainly contribute to the lessening of tension on the Korean peninsula and will increase the possibility of a peaceful solution to the problems between these two countries, which are friends of Cameroon.

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

We also welcome Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, whose presence in our midst gives renewed vigour to the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination, as enshrined in the Charter of our Organization. Their admission is a source of profound satisfaction, and we extend our most heartfelt congratulations to them. We should also like to express our readiness to cooperate fully with Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, whose admission to the United Nations strengthens the universality of our Organization. May both States be most welcome among us.

The forty-sixth session is taking place after the triumph of law during the recent events in the Gulf and in the Soviet Union - two major events which, among others, fully reflect the breathtaking changes occurring in the world under the impetus of powerful trends in favour of freedom. This wind of change, which is conducive to a reawakening of nationalism and an affirmation of the irredentist tendency, is whipping up tensions within several States, North and South, whose stability is being severely affected thereby.

This is a decisive turning-point in the history of all humankind, a turning-point which brings with it serious and unforeseeable challenges which require us to work together to prepare the most suitable responses. Standing shoulder to shoulder in handling these common challenges and the changes to which they are giving rise, we should be able to cope effectively with them.

In particular, the new, general aspiration of all peoples without exception for progress should be examined from all aspects, because, for international peace and security, it would be an illusion to think that the end of East-West rivalry should lead only to the integration of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe into the world economy. In the East, as in the

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

South, we see each day a forceful convergence of democratic values and the economic policies which are now universal; the resulting interdependence of hopes and expectations requires us to seek a new world equilibrium based on taking into account the aspirations and needs of all the component parts of international society.

The need to reconcile assistance to the countries of Eastern Europe and the imperatives of international solidarity for the struggle against poverty is today undeniably a profound obligation if we do not want the disappearance of the iron curtain to lead to the building of a stronger wall of poverty between North and South.

It is indeed true, as is stressed by the report of the South Commission, that every country is in the first instance responsible for its own development. Cameroon shares this position, and completely supports the new philosophy of development that this report advocates. Are we not, therefore, right to turn with hope to the international community for the creation of conditions conducive to the attainment of the objectives of the countries of the South, objectives aimed at lasting development based on collective self-sufficiency? How could we not appeal for greater fairness at a time when we see an international economic situation that places the developing countries at a disadvantage? Opposite the prosperous economies of the North are the crisis economies of most of the countries of the South, stifled under the burden of unbearable debt, which is aggravated by fluctuations in exchange and interest rates.

It is simply untenable for the net financial outflows from the poor countries to the rich to continue in a situation characterized by a decline in official assistance for development, increased deterioriation in the terms of

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

trade and a widespread and continuing collapse in the prices paid for raw materials. The social and political costs of the structural adjustment programmes our countries are applying so courageously seem only more exorbitant and difficult to bear as a result.

This is clearly not a problem which can be analysed solely in economic terms: it is in fact a question of ethics, in particular as far as Africa is concerned, where we see the desperate situation of a continent being sacrificed. The eligibility of four more African countries for the category of least developed, which already covers more than two thirds of the States on the continent, is a sad illustration of this fact.

Of course, there is now apparent a growing awareness of the need to tackle this situation, which is extremely grave, more forcefully. The measures to alleviate the debt burden of the poorest countries are part of this growing awareness, which is also reflected in a world-wide consensus on the actions and strategies to be implemented to overcome poverty and underdevelopment. Examples of this are the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation adopted by the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session, the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and the second Substantial Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries.

The evaluation at this session of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development should, as was so rightly proposed by the Secretary-General, lead to the adoption of plans to create conditions conducive to lasting development in Africa. It is therefore important that the commitments to give the necessary impetus to these alternative development approaches, which were undertaken by consensus, should be fulfilled.

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

The delegation of Cameroon welcomes the adoption, during the resumption of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, of resolution 45/264, on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields.

The summer session of the Economic and Social Council and, in particular, the special high-level meeting which was held during that session, revealed the limits of international cooperation for development and at the same time pointed to new prospects for strengthening it.

The restructuring process must continue in the spirit of resolution 45/264 so that the organizations in the United Nations system are given suitable structures and resources for development work. In so doing, the democratic principles which govern the functioning of our Organization must be maintained in order to avoid sidelining the majority of Member States from the management of world affairs, because we must not forget that only a dynamic synergy between the efforts of all the protagonists can promote the search for appropriate solutions to the major challenges of our time.

In this context, the international economic deadlines are of prime importance. A satisfactory conclusion to the Uruguay Round would mark the retreat of protectionism and would thus contribute to getting world trade moving again.

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

We place the same hopes in the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development as we do in the Secretary-General's proposal for the convening of an international conference on development financing. Because it is inspired by the same concerns, the Japanese initiative on the holding of a summit in 1993 on African development deserves to be warmly welcomed.

The progress made in the field of disarmament also gives us grounds to hope that additional resources will be released for development. Cameroon therefore wishes to commend the United States and the Soviet Union for the worthy efforts they have made to strengthen the international climate of détente, as reflected in the signing of the START agreements on strategic arms reduction.

Because of its boldness and scope, the very recent decision of the United States unilaterally to make significant reductions in its nuclear arsenal augurs well for international peace and security. We welcome that decision all the more warmly because of the interest it has aroused in the Soviet Union, giving the international community hope that the nuclear Powers will resolutely embark on the path of general and complete disarmament. The increase in the number of parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons seems to offer an appropriate framework for achieving this objective, for the greater good of mankind.

It is also fitting to thank the United Nations for the support it has given the Cameroonian Government's efforts to promote confidence-building measures among the members of the Economic Community of Central African States. In this respect, the adoption at this session of the conclusions and recommendations of the subregional seminar held in Yaoundé from 17 to

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

21 June 1991 by the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs will make it possible to strengthen peace and security in the subregion. Likewise, South Africa's adherence to the non-proliferation Treaty constitutes an important step towards the conclusion of an agreement on the denuclearization of Africa.

The improvement in the current international situation is reflected in the favourable developments in certain regional conflicts. In regard to Cambodia, we welcome the presence among us of the delegation of that friendly country, which has been afflicted by a long and costly war and now sees the prospect of finally achieving national reconciliation. We hope that the Security Council's peace plan will be implemented and that Cambodia, reconciled at last, will be able to fulfil its destiny.

For the same reasons, we welcome the efforts towards peace and national reconciliation now under way in Angola and Mozambique. Cameroon also notes with satisfaction the cease-fire recently established among the parties directly involved in the conflict in Western Sahara. There is thus hope that a referendum will at last be organized, under the auspices of the United Nations, on the future status of that territory.

Recent developments in the situation in South Africa raise the same hopes. The dismantling of the legal pillars of apartheid has not, however, eliminated tensions that give rise to inter-ethnic violence, or doubts about the will of the Pretoria regime to conclude an agreement on the establishment of a non-racial, democratic South African society. The international community must therefore remain alert to this new situation and relax its pressure only when the process of democratization that has begun in that country becomes irreversible.

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

My delegation also welcomes the efforts made to convene a peace conference in the Middle East. We therefore urge all the parties involved to cooperate in good faith so that this exceptional opportunity to achieve peace will not be lost.

In other parts of the world where hotbeds of tension unfortunately persist, the virtues of dialogue must prevail over the logic of confrontation. Peace must be restored or consolidated in Liberia, the Horn of Africa, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Cyprus. The involvement of the United Nations in the process of national reconciliation and democratization under way in Central America reflects our Organization's renewed influence in crisis management and in the quest for negotiated solutions to local conflicts. The Secretary-General's efforts in that direction should be fully supported, as should the restoration of legitimacy in Haiti.

The planning and implementation of lasting development, taking into account the needs to protect the environment and the requirements of development, highlight the great importance of the environmental problem. The 1992 "Summit of the Planet Earth" must not only lead to a real charter for the Earth and the basic principles of nations' economic and environmental conduct for the next millenium, but also establish appropriate mechanisms to facilitate access by developing countries to financing and technologies that are necessary if they are to include ecological factors in their development policies.

In the social sphere, United Nations efforts to promote the struggles against AIDS, narcotics trafficking and drug abuse must remain central to the concerns of the international community. The same applies to actions undertaken with a view to involving women in the development process, as well

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

as efforts to protect the handicapped, children and other vulnerable sectors of society. The holding of a world summit on social development and of the fourth world conference on women in 1995 will provide an opportunity to review all these problems at the highest level.

Natural and other disasters that the world has increasingly faced should be given our complete attention. The devastating consequences of floods in Bangladesh and, more recently, in China emphasize the urgent need to increase the ability of the United Nations to react more consistently to these situations. It is to be hoped that the thought being given to this subject will result in solutions that will make it possible better to manage our urgent humanitarian assistance.

We are pleased at the progress achieved at the ninth session of the Preparatory Commission on the Law of the Sea concerning, inter alia, the registration of new pioneer investors and the establishment of a training group. But the States parties must demonstrate greater political will in order to protect the compromise reached in the 1982 Convention and its annexes that enshrines the principle that the resources of the sea-bed are the common heritage of mankind.

The aspirations of peoples to freedom and democracy are today inescapable demands. It is in response to the expectations of the people of Cameroon that the policy of renewal drawn up in 1982 by the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, has been developed in important ways. Thus, measures have been adopted for the establishment of a complete multi-party system, a general and unconditional amnesty, and the development of community life with participation by all. Conditions are today established for the various political trends to be expressed clearly within the framework of free and democratic elections.

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

In spite of upheavals linked to the profound democratic changes in our national life, the Government is sparing no effort to lead the entire country towards greater freedom, economic and social development and respect for human rights. Appropriate measures have been taken to avoid any mistakes that could jeopardize peace and national harmony and unity or that could jeopardize the safety of Cameroonian or foreign persons or assets.

I want to stress that thanks to the political maturity and patriotism of Cameroonians, democratic developments in our country are moving forward at a satisfying pace. We appeal for understanding, trust and support from all people of good will so the process can be strengthened further.

The conclusions of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights will encourage our efforts in this field and will promote the universality of those rights.

The end of the cold war gives mankind a historic opportunity for reconciliation and for shaping the contours of a new international order. To be balanced, that new order must rest on the primacy of law and on world peace and security, as well as on a more effective international solidarity for development. Science and technology are making constant progress; along with the world's resources, they can make that objective attainable, so long as developed countries pick up the historic gauntlet of this challenge to us all and realize that their power carries with it the duty to act with justice and to be seen as just.

Hence, we think this is an excellent opportunity to permit other feelings to be expressed in the management of the United Nations. That is warranted

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

not only because of our shared vision regarding solving the problems of our time, but also because of our shared determination to work towards a United Nations renaissance.

The African continent's readiness to place the creative spirit of Africans at the service of the United Nations reflects that united vision of our world and the concern for fairness that we all share. May it be given the support it deserves.

Mr. VULKOV (Bulgaria): Please accept my sincere congratulations, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, which we see as due recognition of your outstanding professional experience and of the role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the contemporary world. I hope that relations between our two countries will develop in the best interest of our two peoples and of international cooperation. Allow me to wish you every success and to express my confidence that under your highly competent leadership this session will be a most successful one.

I would also like to thank Mr. Guido de Marco, the President of the Assembly at its forty-fifth session, for his contribution to the efficient and fruitful work of that session.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express our special gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his tireless and selfless efforts aimed at strengthening international peace and cooperation and at enhancing the role and prestige of the United Nations.

We welcome the admission of the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia to the big family of the United Nations. We

(Mr. Vulkov, Bulgaria)

believe that the universal nature of this Organization is one of its greatest virtues and a major precondition for success. We are particularly delighted at the admission of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, which is further recognition of the irreversibility of the democratic changes in today's world.

The forty-sixth session of the General Assembly is taking place at a time of historic changes, unprecedented in scope and depth, affecting various parts of the globe. Democracy has triumphed over totalitarianism. The decades-old bipolar model of the world that we all knew, a model primarily based on the military and political confrontation between the two systems, has been gradually giving way to a new state of international relations. Free of the icy breath of the cold war, this new state of international relations paves the way for normal communication between peoples from different countries and continents. Ideological rivalry and mutual suspicion are being superseded by understanding and confidence. A growing number of free and sovereign States are pooling together their efforts, seeking solutions to urgent global issues of peace, security, disarmament, economic development, ecology, health care and the elimination of famine, terrorism and drug trafficking.

Today, all of us, together or individually, are seeking our place in the future, a future whose outlines are becoming increasingly clear. Any strategy, any philosophy can succeed only if and when it is guided by, and based on, universally recognized human democratic values. That is the foundation on which the new world order must be built.

But the present period of transition is not entirely free of danger. The world has not completely rid itself of forces which - as happened in Moscow last August - are ready and have the daring to raise a hand against the established constitutional democratic order in one country or another. Those

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forces cannot understand or accept the collapse of communism. And in many cases the result is that regional, or often even international security, is held hostage to national, ethnic, religious or social conflicts.

Today's complex international situation requires an adequate response from the world community and the full and efficient utilization of the experience accumulated over the years by the United Nations. Of particular importance to that end is the establishment of a multilateral approach to politics, which we see in terms of the common aspiration of nations large and small to seek peaceful settlement of disputes, to manifest solidarity in the face of aggression, to reduce and control military arsenals, and to re-channel funds thus released into the quest for solutions to world problems. Humanity will be able to confront the challenges of the future only if it strives for the establishment of a radically new system of global security in all its aspects, for fair and well-balanced trade and economic relations and for strict observance of human rights and liberties and of the inalienable right of all peoples to self-determination.

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, a different and surely more complex aspect of international solidarity has emerged: namely, how to provide compensation for those nations that suffered the gravest losses and damage in fulfilling their commitment to the relevant Security Council resolutions, which were the result of the will of the international community.

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As one of the countries most affected in this respect, Bulgaria underscores the continuing validity of the Security Council decision of 12 December 1990, in relation to Article 50 of the United Nations Charter, as well as of the subsequent appeal (S/PV.2985) by the Council's President. We now look forward to the concrete practical measures that will ultimately come as a result of these decisions, and we are happy that the matter has not been ignored by the Secretary-General in his report (A/46/1) on the work of the Organization.

The positive developments in international relations are largely due to the collapse of Communism and to the swift democratic process in the eastern half of Europe. We are now witnessing a unique period in history, when all nations in this continent are joining their efforts in building the future European architecture. With the signing of the Paris Charter, the member States of the Conference on Security and Cooperation (CSCE) in Europe declared their determination to say goodbye to the legacy of the past and to establish genuine democracy, peace and a united Europe. Within the framework of this forum a system of security and stability has begun to take shape, with mutual confidence and partnership as its basic tenets.

The dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty and the ongoing transformation of the political and military strategy of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are indeed steps of paramount historic importance. The emphasis is gradually being shifted from military deterrence to political factors and concrete steps towards restructuring and reducing armed forces. The entry into force and implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe will mark another major stage in the transition towards defensive sufficiency in that continent.

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At the same time, there is an ever-increasing need to make yet another step forward in the near future, aimed at eliminating the destabilizing subregional imbalances in certain parts of the continent. I can assure the Assembly that my country, Bulgaria, is ready to take its share of the common responsibility of European States. It is in that light that we regard the forthcoming admission of Bulgaria to the Council of Europe and the political cooperation which our country has established and has been developing with NATO and the Western European Union. At the same time, Bulgaria is entitled to have the understanding and support of its partners on the common road towards a united and free Europe, with full regard to the legitimate interests of its security.

The Balkans, which are part and parcel of Europe, have also undergone substantial transformations over the past year. Yet I feel duty-bound to note that this region is again charged with tremendous tension. We are particularly alarmed by the situation in Yugoslavia. It is clearly getting out of control. There is an escalation of the fighting and an increasingly real danger of an all-out civil war. The aggravation of the crisis is due to a large extent to the attempts forcibly to redraw borders between the Republics and redistribute territories. There is a danger of the inter-ethnic armed conflicts spreading to borderline areas, or even spilling over into the territories of neighbouring States.

In this alarming situation, Bulgaria has been actively supporting the efforts of the CSCE and the European Community in seeking a peaceful settlement to the crisis. However, we are bound to note with concern that the concrete results of these efforts to contribute to an adequate solution have not yet met expectations. Bulgaria is in favour of seeking a solution to the

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conflict by reasonable dialogue, with strict observance of human rights, the interests of all Republics and the legitimate expression of their will for self-determination and the free choice of form of government. These principles, however, should be implemented by peaceful means, in the language of diplomatic negotiations and political compromise. The revision by force of the existing borders is utterly unacceptable.

We believe that a viable cease-fire agreement strictly observed by all factions involved and a clear denunciation of the policy of faits accomplis are indispensable for the progress of the negotiations. We support Security Council resolution 713 (1991) for a peaceful solution to the crisis. We stand ready to offer our active support for any initiative, whether launched by the world Organization or on a regional basis, aimed at promoting a political settlement of the crisis in compliance with the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe.

With respect to all-Balkan cooperation, Bulgaria highly appreciates this positive development, which it regards as an integral part of the European process. It is also necessary to extend cooperation in the Balkans into the political and military spheres, particularly in matters of confidence-building and security.

Last year, addressing the General Assembly, the President of Bulgaria, Mr. Zhelyu Zhelev, voiced the determination of the Bulgarian people to break away from the totalitarian past and to become part of the democratic civilized world, building its future on the basis of universally recognized human values and norms. I am now happy to be able to state that we have not veered away from the chosen steep path of transition from a totalitarian towards a democratic civil society, from a centralized economy towards a free-market

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economy. A multi-party Parliament, the result of the first free and democratic elections in 40 years, held in Bulgaria in June 1990, a constitutionally elected President who himself epitomizes the struggle for democracy, a Government formed by members of the main political forces represented in Parliament - these are the motive forces and guarantees of the irreversible nature of the changes in my country.

We consider it our great achievement that we have managed to preserve the internal peace; this very fact is a stabilizing factor on a regional level. I have no doubt that the outcome of the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Bulgaria, scheduled to be held on 13 October, will adequately reflect the general trend of change in my country and in Eastern Europe at large, and will further stimulate democracy.

The peaceful nature of the democratic process in Bulgaria may not be enough in itself to hold the daily attention of the international community, but there should be no doubt that the ongoing transition in my country, in its scope and dimensions, is in full harmony with the most radical and irreversible changes in the budding European democracies. Such sweeping reforms have established Bulgaria as a nation with a new face, rapidly moving towards democracy. We have placed in the limelight the imperative necessity to respect, observe and guarantee all the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms - a sine qua non for building Bulgaria as a modern and democratic State where the rule of law is the basic premise.

Protection against discrimination of any kind and for any reason whatsoever, the abolition of privileges, the guaranteed freedom of expression, the right to share in the governing of the country by participating in fair, democratic and regular elections, freedom of thought and religion, freedom of

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association and the division of power - those are but a few of the milestones on the road to democracy which form the core of the new Constitution of Bulgaria.

We are confident that the standards and norms in the sphere of human rights adopted and upheld by the United Nations have played an invaluable role in inspiring and encouraging the democratic changes in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and in reforming their national legislations and administrative practices. The radically changed attitude of democratic Bulgaria towards the internationally recognized criteria on human rights has been evidenced in a series of new legislative acts providing sound guarantees for the complete and unconditional observance by my country of its international commitments.

These democratic changes have provided favourable conditions for laying the foundations of Bulgaria's new foreign policy, which is sovereign and independent. The principles, objectives and priorities of our foreign policy have been thoroughly revised. Rid of its previous ideological one-sidedness, this new foreign policy is designed to provide the best opportunities for the further development and deepening of the democratic process in my country, for Bulgaria's ever-closer commitment to the established European and world democratic values and structures.

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Naturally, it is the primary objective of Bulgaria's independent foreign policy to seek stronger guarantees for the country's territorial integrity and national security. In this, we shall explore the opportunities we have on a bilateral or regional and international level, as well as the mechanisms provided under the United Nations Charter.

Bulgaria consistently upholds the principle of the rule of law and the ensuing need to build an effective international legal order. The country's new constitution contains provisions explicitly stating the precedence of international treaties in force for Bulgaria over such clauses of its domestic legislation as may be at variance with them.

The years we are now going through mark a turning-point in the role of the United Nations in today's world. The entire development of mankind since the devastating Second World War has highlighted the timeless significance of the United Nations ideals as the basis and standard for international relations. We are convinced that, in the present circumstances, the United Nations will continue to consolidate its role as a unique forum of cooperation for harmonizing the interests of nations towards achieving mutually acceptable solutions and broader consensus, promoting freedom, democracy, the rule of law, economic well-being, prosperity and the observance of human rights as paramount requirements for all States. In this context, we deem it appropriate that a thorough revision be made of some outdated views and resolutions of the United Nations bearing the birthmarks of ideological confrontation, notably the notorious General Assembly resolution 3379 (XXX). Also irrelevant today are the provisions in the United Nations Charter regarding the so-called enemy States. I am sure that there could, and there should, be a way to eliminate this anachronism.

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A particularly encouraging fact is the growing role of the United Nations in the keeping of international peace and security. After almost five decades, the Organization's activity is getting closer than ever to the original idea of its founders, providing adequate conditions for the efficient functioning of the system of international security which underlies the United Nations Charter. In the new international situation, this means, in practical terms, being ready and able to react to new kinds of destabilizing factors, very different from those characteristic of the recent past. At the same time, opportunities have been created for unbinding that part of its peace-making potential that, until recently, remained bound for ideological or political reasons. Some good cases in point are the resolutions of the Security Council on restoring the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait and, notably, the exemplary consensus among the Council's five permanent members. In our view, the experience accumulated and the precedents thus set are of substantial importance for further streamlining and harmonizing the action of the respective mechanisms within the system of international security. This is one of the roads for the United Nations to follow in its further development in order to remain and even become a more effective guarantor of international security as well as of the national security of each and every Member State.

The course of events over the past year definitely shows that the international community should rely to a greater extent on the potentials of preventive diplomacy. In the future, the United Nations could play an indispensable role in the early identification of crises. The setting up and efficient operation of such mechanisms will no doubt have a considerable general stabilizing effect.

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The radical changes taking place in the international situation in recent years have made the United Nations peace-keeping task considerably easier. The world Organization has done a great deal to ease tension in various hot spots around the globe. We are now witnessing a series of prompt and efficient international actions under United Nations auspices aimed at containing and seeking an effective settlement for a number of international conflicts. There are favourable possibilities and hopes for an early peaceful and just solution to such complex international issues as the Cyprus problem, peace in Cambodia, the situation in Afghanistan, the referendum in Western Sahara and so on. We are following, with keen interest, the changing situation in the Republic of South Africa, where a series of legislative steps were made that merit due respect and inspire hope for a radical constitutional reform in the near future, having as its aim the ultimate and complete abolition of the system of apartheid. We are also optimistic about the efforts that are being made to seek a lasting and just settlement for the Middle East conflict by all political means available.

As for the post-war situation in the Persian Gulf, it is in the best interest of peace and stability that the Iraqi authorities should comply with the respective Security Council resolutions and not create any obstacles for the United Nations teams in the fulfilment of the duties assigned them by the international community.

The new challenges in the international situation also pose new requirements for the United Nations functioning as an integral system, presupposing certain structural changes there. The matter should, in our view, be approached in a cautious and flexible manner, bearing fully in mind the interests of all Member States.

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The international spirit of partnership and cooperation has also borne rich fruit in the sphere of arms control and disarmament. Only the other day, as we were discussing, here in this very Hall, the global problems of mankind, we witnessed the launching of a historic new initiative by President Bush that was welcomed with broad approval and appreciation by the international community - an approval and appreciation to which Bulgaria wholeheartedly subscribes.

New Bulgaria is looking towards the possibilities for peace and stability that a pragmatic approach to such problems may bring. We pay due attention to markedly global as well as to purely regional initiatives in this direction, as the prospects for Bulgaria's national security are equally related to both, bearing in mind that we live, and have to live, in a region where global strategic interests and the regional interests of a number of States have long been closely interwoven.

Bulgaria is striving to promote the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and other destabilizing military technologies in more than one way: by stepping up its national exports control, as well as by offering assistance in the process of international harmonization of the underlying principles of a responsible arms-export policy, by means, inter alia, of the United Nations register of international arms supplies.

We welcome and appreciate the accession of all nuclear-weapons States to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the efforts to bring the negotiations on the convention on the universal ban and elimination of chemical weapons to an early and successful end. Bulgaria is preparing to abide strictly by its commitments under the future convention.

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The lowering of the general level of confrontation has made it possible to release resources to enable the international community to address the common problems facing the entire world. Conversion of military resources and industries for civilian use in a number of States is already stimulating the growth of their national economies.

Now more than ever the safeguarding of peace and security depends on the provision of suitable conditions for a steady social and economic development of all countries and regions. The United Nations should, therefore, occupy a befitting place in the process of harmonizing international economic cooperation with the new political realities.

One of the major factors for the stable and balanced functioning of the world economy is the establishment and maintenance of a favourable global economic climate. Eliminating the existing imbalances in international financial relations and the setting up of a system of open trade are, without question, priority tasks of paramount significance. It is vitally important that a lasting solution be found to the foreign debt issue. Promoting dialogue between debtors, creditors and international financial institutions with the active cooperation of the United Nations would certainly be helpful in this respect.

Among the common problems facing mankind, of particular urgency in recent years is that of protection of the environment. National boundaries are no barrier to polluted and contaminated air or waters, acid rain, the greenhouse effect or nuclear fallout. Only by the joint efforts of the international community could a solution be found to the question of the ecological survival of the planet. We believe that the World Conference on the Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil in 1992, will develop a universal ecological policy to deal with such matters.

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The successful transition of the countries in Eastern Europe to a free market economy and their integration into the world economic, trade and financial systems will provide a positive impetus for the world economy in the long term. This process will essentially become one of the main challenges of the 1990s and its successful implementation will largely determine whether there will be economic and political stability in the world.

The triumph of the ideas of liberty, democracy and human dignity today is a major source of new hopes for mankind. Whether these hopes will become a reality depends, to a great extent, on the activity of the United Nations, which we are certain will live up to the standards of the upcoming new era of global cooperation. It is the world Organization that is called upon, and is indeed able, to become the hub and centre for pooling together the efforts of all countries and peoples to build a new, stable and prosperous world. And I should like to assure the Assembly that new, democratic Bulgaria will spare no effort to be a worthy participant in the drive to achieve these noble and lofty goals. As President Bush reminded us the other day: destiny is not a matter of chance, but a matter of choice. I should like to assure you that we in Bulgaria have made our choice and we shall be building our future in harmony with these very ideals of liberty, democracy and human dignity.

Mr. FILALI (Morocco) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to extend to you, on behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco, my sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

We are confident that your political skills and deep knowledge of international affairs will enable you to guide successfully our deliberations and lead us to satisfactory results.

(Mr. Filali, Morocco)

The trust placed in you by the General Assembly reflects, at the same time, its appreciation for the eminent role played in international relations by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a country with which Morocco maintains fraternal and exemplary relations.

The delegation of Morocco is happy to assure you and the members of the Bureau of its full support and cooperation in the discharge of your important task.

I cannot fail to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco, for the exemplary manner in which he conducted the work of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

I should also like at the outset to welcome in our midst the three Baltic States - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - as well as the two Koreas, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.

At the same time, it is my great pleasure to express to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, my deepest appreciation and gratitude for the tireless efforts he is understaking in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the United Nations and for his constant endeavours to consolidate the role of the United Nations in favour of international peace and security. I should also like to commend the numerous initiatives he has undertaken since he took office in order to find solutions to international crises and international conflicts.

During the past decade, the Kingdom of Morocco has maintained very close relations with the Secretary-General, exemplified, in particular, by the collaboration of my country with him in order to find a solution to a question of great importance to Morocco.

Our deliberations take place at a particular juncture, which is the result of an historic change in international relations as a result of the

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elimination of contradictions between East and West on military and ideological issues and the ushering in of an era of understanding and cooperation in their relations.

Those changes will undoubtedly leave their imprint on our world for many years to come. This situation stirs our minds in different directions: sometimes, it leads us to optimism while at others it fills us with concern and foreboding, in particular with regard to the role assigned to the developing world in these circumstances: what its future will be; whether it will have a say in the shaping of that future and whether it will have a rightful share of the resources of the world.

The liberation of the countries of Eastern Europe from the plight of the old system and their accession to the free world and market economy, the historic events that have radically altered the political life in the Soviet Union, as well as its rapprochement with the Western world - all those developments incline us to optimism and to believe that the peoples of the world are adopting, with regard to their priorities and relationships, new approaches that stem from the will to resolve their real problems instead of pursuing policies that lead only to the accumulation of arms of devastation and mass destruction.

As we express our profound satisfaction for the elimination of the underlying reasons of confrontation between East and West and our hope that these developments will reflect positively on the international community and encompass the whole world, we cannot but admit, with deep regret, that this development has not been accompanied, so far, by any improvement in the deplorable conditions of the overwhelming majority of the world's peoples.

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Third world countries continue to flounder under the burden of the debt problems. In fact, the debt-servicing burden prevents them from meeting the basic needs of their peoples - mainly the elimination of poverty, ignorance and disease. It does not allow them either to provide employment, adequate housing or to confront natural disasters and social ills.

With regard to the prices of primary commodities, which are the essential, if not the only, source of income of developing countries, those prices are in the throes of a downward trend which aggravates the debt problem of these countries.

The continued existence of such a situation is bound to affect international relations as a whole, sooner or later. It is indeed inconceivable to leave more than half the population of the world paralysed and unable to fulfil their role in our civilization.*

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* Mr. Min (Myanmar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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It is, therefore, incumbent on the international community to find the appropriate means to take advantage of the current developments and to channel them into a new direction that would be beneficial to all the peoples of the world. This can be done only through a constructive dialogue in which all members of the international community should participate with a view to defining the role our Organization should play in shaping the new world order which, we hope, will be fair and conducive to coexistence and cooperation. In our view, the United Nations is the most appropriate framework for the attainment of such a goal.

Morocco attaches a special importance to the movement towards unity pursued by the five States of the Maghreb, because we are convinced that the setting up of a solid Maghreb structure - which is an ambition of all the peoples of the region who enjoy close bonds of religion, language and history, as well as a common destiny - has also become today an absolute imperative if we are to mobilize all energies for the development, prosperity and well-being of the Maghreb peoples. It is also an absolute necessity if we are to cope with the challenges of our time and coordinate cooperation with other economic groupings.

Thanks to the strong will that inspires our peoples in the redoubling of their efforts to reach the goals enshrined in the Treaty of Marrakesh, which established the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), important results have been achieved by the Fourth Maghreb Summit Conference which was convened in Casablanca on the 15th and the 16th of September 1991. In the course of that summit conference, the Union completed the setting up of its structures. This will no doubt enable us to achieve the aim of complete coordination and fruitful cooperation at all cultural, social and economic levels, as well as in the daily lives of the peoples of the Maghreb.

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In reaffirmation of the Union's will to establish constructive cooperation with other regional groupings, the summit conference recommended the pursuit of contacts and consultations with the Economic Community of West Africa. Those contacts will allow for coordination between those two groupings which belong to Africa, both the African continent and the South, where there is most urgent need for dialogue between all its countries. It is a well-known fact that Morocco, which has active economic ties with many States of the North, was one of the first countries to call for the initiation of such dialogue. We are convinced that dialogue is the ideal means of unifying the positions of the countries of the South in a manner that would allow them to defend their interests within the framework of the North-South dialogue, which we hope will be constructive and fruitful.

As for the steady contact established between AMU, on the one hand, and the European Economic Community (EEC) and its Western Mediterranean members, on the other, we have noticed constant progress towards achieving the assigned goal, namely, the laying of sound foundations for development, security and stability in the interests of all countries in that region. It is an established fact that those two groupings are linked by solid ties of history and geography, which manifest themselves in political and economic, as well as in cultural and human fields. It is, however, regrettable that those relations witness some instablility from time to time - a situation that requires the emergence of a common political will capable of transcending certain negative outlooks and of imbuing this relationship with a new dynamism that would enable it to live up to the expectations of our peoples and the common principles and ideals we share. This can only be achieved by avoiding futile attitudes and focusing on the practical means whereby we can achieve the level of cooperation that would ensure for both shores of the Western

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Mediterranean the stability and security we need so that we may engage in a steady and beneficial dialogue.

If I have addressed this particular question at length, it is because my country has developed multi-faceted ties with the EEC. However, those close relations have not so far met the requirements of development and the free voluntary exchange of goods and ideas. However, Morocco, just like its other Maghreb partners, remains ready to initiate that dialogue. We are hopeful that the next meeting between the AMU and the EEC to be held in Brussels in November 1991, will lead to results that would give a new impetus to the process and create an appropriate framework for cooperation between the two groupings.

We are all aware of the details of the Palestinian problem and of the suffering of the Palestinian people, which has occasionally led to violence and extreme positions. It goes without saying that Morocco supports the just struggle of the Palestinian people in their striving to exercize their inalienable and legitimate right to establish their independent State on their native soil under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, their sole and legitimate representative.

Though we are now entering upon a new era of international relations, we cannot but underline the tragedy of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories which arises from the persistent Israeli refusal to implement international resolutions and its persistence in its settlement policy with the aim of creating a new demographic situation in those territories, a situation which is in total contradiction with the present international

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effort aimed at reaching just and lasting peaceful solutions based on international legality.

Morocco lends its support to the current initiative of convening the Middle East peace conference. We consider this initiative to be the best means of achieving a just and lasting peace in the region and finding a final solution to the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israel conflict. We are all the more optimistic as the President of the United States of America and the President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics - co-Chairmen of the peace conference on the Middle East - have repeatedly stated that the conference will be based fundamentally on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Morocco would like to express its full readiness to work for convening the conference under the right conditions to ensure its success in the best interests of all concerned, put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict and, thereby, achieve the happiness and satisfaction of the people of the whole region.

Finally, I cannot fail to mention the support of my country for the Declaration issued by the Palestine National Council at its most recent meeting last month in Algiers.

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Morocco would like to express its profound satisfaction at the results of the Lebanon peace process which started with the setting up of the High Arab Tripartite Committee in 1989. Those results are: the signing of the Taif Accord, the election of the President of the Republic and the returning of a legitimate government in Lebanon that has gained the recognition of the international community.

On this occastion, I would appeal to all nations of the world to continue to provide their assistance to Lebanon, so as to enable that country to implement its programmes of reconstruction, and ask them to contribute to the international fund for the reconstruction of Lebanon.

Morocco, a member of the Tripartite Committee which has strong ties with the sisterly country of Lebanon, will not fail to exert every effort to enable that country to lead a decent life of freedom through reconciliation and national understanding among all its citizens.

Morocco has followed with great interest the developments on the African continent during this year. We consider the important steps taken in order to eradicate the system of apartheid in South Africa to be a resounding victory for the principles of justice and equality. This gives us hope that a democratic and multiracial society where all the citizens of that country could coexist without any discrimination can be established.

On this occasion, we should like to congratulate the people of South Africa on the political victories achieved recently, at the cost of heavy sacrifices, which enabled them to restore some of their civil rights. We welcome also the courageous measures undertaken by President de Klerk aiming at the eradication of the policies of apartheid from its roots. We encourage him to continue on this path, in collaboration with the African leaders of his

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country, so that constitutional reforms can be adopted in conformity with the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the South African people.

On the other hand, the positive development witnessed by the sisterly country of Angola constitute a source of satisfaction. The parties concerned have indeed shown wisdom by the ending of their fratricidal conflicts and the signing of an agreement this year in Portugal the repercussions of which are beneficial to the entire people of Angola.

I am happy to announce that Morocco is participating in the Second United Nations Angola Verification Mission, with elements of its Royal Armed Forces and Police, because of its great interest in African affairs and its solidarity with the sisterly country of Angola.

The agreement concluded by the four Cambodian parties and in particular the establishment of the Supreme National Council, the chairmanship of which was recently assigned to Prince Norodom Sihanouk, as well as the crucial steps undertaken to put an end to their conflict and allow their people to live in peace and security, are in fact very wise decisions. We should like to express our satisfaction and congratulations to all those who have participated in that process.

We should like also to express our hope that the Afghan parties will be able to reach a lasting settlement in order to allow the brotherly Afghan people to live a decent life of peace under a government of their choosing.

Morocco attaches extreme importance to the so-called question of Western Sahara, as it represents for the entire Moroccan people a highly important issue linked to the very destiny of our country and it also has considerable repercussions on the future of our subregion.

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In this regard, I should like to recall the organic link which exists between that territory and the other parts of Morocco. The social, religious, human and historical ties which mark the relations between Sahara and the other provinces of Morocco, as well as the commitments of allegiance undertaken by the entire Moroccan people towards their Monarch, have blended the whole Moroccan territory in one melting pot. Succeeding centuries have only consolidated those ties. Likewise, the short period of time in which Morocco had to live divided under a very peculiar colonial rule witnessed heroic resistance carried out by the Moroccan people all over its territory in order to defend and preserve its unity by all means.

While colonialism had divided Morocco into different zones - the international zone of Tangier, the French protectorate in the middle part of the country and the Spanish zone in the northern and southern provinces - the liberation of those zones took place gradually, one part after the other, in a peaceful manner, circumstances permitting.

The southern zone was liberated starting with the province of Tarfaya in 1958, followed by Sidi Ifni in 1969, until Morocco recovered in 1975 what is called the "Western Sahara", the last part of the southern zone which was under the rule of the same Spanish authority. This recovery of Sahara took place on the basis of an international agreement signed in Madrid on 14 November 1975, of which the General Assembly has taken note and which was registered with the Secretariat of our Organization.

One would like to ask the reasons why the question of Western Sahara remained on the agenda after the recovery by Morocco of its Saharan provinces. At this juncture, we do not see any need to go back to the history of this problem now that we are looking at the future with hope.

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We should like to recall, nevertheless, that Morocco, as an African State, had tried to settle this question within the African framework. However, when we could not achieve that objective, we voluntarily requested the Secretary-General in 1984 to start officially a mission of good offices.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar has, in fact, exerted efforts for which we are thankful and initiated contacts with all parties. The good offices that he has undertaken since April 1986 have resulted in the elaboration of a framework plan approved by the Security Council in April of this year in its resolution 690 (1991). Morocco, which was behind the initiative of the Secretary-General, would like to state its total support for that framework plan.

The implementation of all the elements of that plan will undoubtedly require respect for all the time frames set in the successive stages provided for in the plan. Likewise, the translation of its provisions into practical measures will require negotiations that could ensure full implementation of both the letter and spirit of the plan.

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We are confident that the cooperation and understanding that have always marked the relations between Morocco and the Secretary-General will contribute to the settlement of this question at the beginning of next year.

In this regard, we should like to extend to the Secretary-General our most sincere thanks and profound gratitude for the tireless efforts he has undertaken and continues to undertake to reach this goal.

The world scene has witnessed, this past year, decisive events that made people talk of a new world order. The present international situation indeed differs completely from the one that prevailed since the Second World War. This will require a new vision for the future of our world.

In order to do that, we, at this crucial juncture, should express our ideas frankly and responsibly, and refrain from imposing one-sided concepts. This can be done only in the context of a comprehensive dialogue that would embrace all peoples of the world and take into account their traditions, history and culture.

We have no doubt that this dialogue will be fruitful only if it takes into consideration the economic situation of the majority of the countries of the world. It would be inconceivable for a new international order to set aside the problems of development. Security and development are two interrelated elements: the one cannot be achieved without the other.

We are optimistic about the possibility of building a world where freedom, security and peace will prevail, a world that tackles all problems in an atmosphere of solidarity and interdependence. We are convinced that this session of the General Assembly will provide a useful opportunity for exchanging views and identifying the ways and means that can lead us to the attainment of this noble objective.

Mr. ESSY (Côte d'Ivoire) (interpretation from French): The election of Ambassador Samir Shihabi to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session does honour to his diplomatic talents and his experience in this Organization. It is also eloquent testimony to the distinguished role and place of honour occupied by his country, Saudi Arabia, within the framework of the new facts of world geopolitics. I can assure him that he can count on the full cooperation of our delegation towards the success of his task.

His predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice of Malta, conducted the proceedings of the forty-fifth session in a remarkable manner. My delegation therefore associates itself with the words of praise that have been addressed to him by previous speakers.

Since 1982 the Secretary-General's reports on the work of the Organization have not been just an analysis of the international situation but also and above all a series of varied proposals designed to enhance the authority and prestige of the United Nations. Today the renaissance of the United Nations is doubtless the result of a fundamental change in attitude and outlook on the part of States, but it is also and above all the result of so many years of effort by the Secretary-General that has made it possible for our Organization to adapt itself wisely to the needs of the current international situation. We therefore must pay a particular tribute to him for the devotion, diplomatic ingenuity and determination he has always shown in carrying out his delicate task of promoting peace and harmony among peoples.

I could not conclude this brief introduction without expressing the great satisfaction of Côte d'Ivoire at seeing the world Organization moving more and more in the direction of universality, with the admission of the new Members:

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the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. I extend to them our warmest congratulations and assure them of our complete readiness to cooperate with them within the framework of our Organization and to maintain relationships of honest cooperation with them.

Côte d'Ivoire has always placed the quest for peace among its highest priorities. It has had the honour of serving for a second time in the Security Council, and at a special moment in the history of international relations. During the recent events, the Security Council eloquently demonstrated that, over and above theoretical debates, it was well able to redress critical situations where there had been a breach of the peace or act of aggression. It is solely the logic of peace that has guided us in the positions we have taken on the questions before the Council. We have always preferred responsible language to an excess of verbiage in the Council and a pragmatic and tolerant approach towards the problems, no matter how grave and distressing, that have come before that body.

We have not been able to remain passive when friendly countries have become the victims of unjust aggression, and we have always placed the triumph of right above the mere reconciliation of conflicting interests. We shall therefore leave the Security Council at the end of this year with the profound conviction of having worked in that organ with all our energy, in the service of peace, and of leaving behind us an image of Côte d'Ivoire of respect for others and of fraternal love. We should like to thank the friendly countries which supported our candidacy at the time of our election to the Security Council.

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The current developments in international relations, characterized by the acceleration and wide scope of political and social changes in various parts of the world, have made it clearer with each passing day that we are gradually entering a new era. Indeed, today the cold war is just history and the whole architecture of international relations that developed out of it is now doomed to obsolescence. Henceforth the conduct of foreign affairs will be guided by the powerful factor of cooperation and understanding between the States whose convergence of views and actions has made possible, among other things, the spectacular strengthening of the United Nations in its role as keeper of the peace. In its turn, the climate of confidence thus created has made possible meetings between the leaders of those States. It is on the basis of that confidence that the United States and the Soviet Union have been able to embark on negotiations with a view to concluding various agreements. Both sides have been able to undertake substantial reductions of their arms stockpiles. For example, those spectres of death - the B-52 superbombers armed with several hundred nuclear warheads - have just been taken off their state of permanent nuclear alert; long- and short-range missiles are beginning to be disarmed; and some nuclear programmes have been abandoned.

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The most cherished hope of mankind, the hope for a world of peace without a nuclear threat, has finally been able to take root. Furthermore, the unilateral disarmament which was proclaimed last week without any preliminary negotiation and without any long and arduous dealings where mistrust and suspicion reign, illuminates the state of mind now prevailing in this area. This so-called policy of "example" heralds, if the challenge is accepted by the USSR, a new dawn in the field of disarmament. We are now entitled to think that there now exists a definite dynamic for peace which would promote the peaceful settlement of conflicts and reduce sources of tension.

That is the case in Angola where we are happy to see taking shape on the horizon a settlement of an internal conflict between the MPLA and UNITA that has lasted for 16 years. The cease-fire in force since the signing in Estoril of the agreement which put an end to hostilities, and the holding of elections in the next few months are all chances for a final settlement of this conflict which has caused so much destruction of property and has taken such a toll of human life.

For its part the Government of my country can only welcome the signing of such an agreement for which it spared no effort in order to prevail upon the parties to overcome their ideological differences. With the return of peace, which we hope to be imminent, the people of Angola will finally be able to begin the only struggle worth their efforts, namely, that of the economic and social development of their country.

With regard to the situation in the Western Sahara, the solution to this thorny problem has never seemed so close. Indeed, the cease-fire which was brought about a few weeks ago between the parties to the conflict, creates conditions for the application of the United Nations peace plan which provides,

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inter alia, for the holding of a referendum. The opportunity will thus be given to the Sahraoui people to take a clear stand on their future. That is why we solemnly and urgently appeal to the various parties to respect the commitments undertaken within the framework of that plan.

The changes which have occurred throughout the world have also had positive repercussions on the development of the internal situation in South Africa. The courageous reforms undertaken by President de Klerk in dismantling the odious system of apartheid have made it possible to embark upon honest cooperation among the different parties in South Africa. It is worth recalling that since 28 April 1971 President Houphouet-Boigny has been advocating the idea of dialogue with South Africa, which alone can promote the development of the internal political situation of that country.

It is both a welcome fact and a major historical event that the first Felix Houphouet-Boigny prize for peace created at the twenty-fifth session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was awarded by an international jury to Nelson Mandela and de Klerk. We thus appeal urgently to all the protagonists in South Africa to rise to the occasion and to promote as soon as possible the advent of a multiracial, egalitarian, democratic South Africa.

The analysis of the Middle East situation suggests that, particularly in this part of the world, the climate of confidence and understanding which has been established in international relations could have the most favourable repercussions on a solution to the conflict which has rent this part of the world for so long. While it is true that the situation remains very alarming, the fact still remains that chances of a just and lasting solution to this conflict seem better than ever before.

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Indeed, the many initiatives currently under way and aimed at promoting negotiations between the various parties, could lead, we believe, to the holding of an international conference on peace in the Middle East. For its part, Côte d'Ivoire would encourage the holding of such a conference to examine the situation overall. It is our wish to see that conference making an effective contribution to a global, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem.

Within the same context we very much hope to see the strengthening of peace in Lebanon so that the sons of that country, battered by 15 years of fratricidal war, can finally in union and concord begin the task of national reconstruction so as to make Lebanon its old vibrant self once again.

In Asia too the dynamic of détente has been witnessed. After the more than two decades of fratricidal war that has battered Cambodia we finally note with relief definite signs of a forthcoming settlement of the Cambodian tragedy within the framework of the United Nations.

We would like to welcome here the concerted action of the permanent members of the Security Council and the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) which for so many years have spared no effort to restore peace to that country.

With your permission, Sir, I should like to revert to Africa, more particularly to Liberia, a neighbour of the Côte d'Ivoire where for almost two years now a fratricidal conflict has been going on with its toll of material damage and the destruction of human life and which also has caused many refugees to flee to neighbouring countries. In Côte d'Ivoire alone there are about 320,000 and the Government and people of our country, with the aid of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, have been trying to give them assistance and support pending their return home.

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However, one of the prerequisites for such a return is the restoration of peace and security in Liberia. Since that time all the Heads of State and Government of the countries of the West African subregion within the framework of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have been working to that end. Several meetings for peace in Liberia have been held under aegis of that organization, particularly through the Standing Mediation Committee and also the Ad Hoc Committee of Five, of which Côte d'Ivoire has the honour to be the President.

The initiatives undertaken within the framework of the work of these two Committees, whose actions are complementary, led to the signing on 17 September 1991 at Yamoussokro of a communiqué whereby the parties reaffirmed their commitment to continue to observe and to strengthen the cease-fire in Liberia. They decided, under the supervision of the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to confine troops to zones to be determined and to disarm them. The parties have also decided to set up an electoral commission of five members with a view to organizing and supervising elections in Liberia. They have also agreed to cooperate fully with the "International Negotiations Network (INN)" of the Carter Centre, designed to provide assistance to the organizing of the electoral process.

We hope that the promising process thus begun will be further and more positively developed in the course of the forthcoming meeting in Yamoussokro on 29 October 1991.

If in political terms the climate of confidence and concord which has been established in the international community has made it possible to solve certain conflicts and open the way to the solution of those which still exist, the same does not apply to international economic relations. Indeed, the

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current situation of the international economy is marked by the appearance of signs of a slow-down more or less everywhere in the world, which constitutes a source of major concern for all the partners of the international community and, particularly, for the developing countries.

The reasons for concern on the part of the developing countries are real and serious and deserve attention. Indeed, the slow-down in economic activity in the industrialized countries, reflected by a real rate of growth of the gross domestic product, which is less than 2 per cent in 1991, would have as a consequence among other things a significant decline in growth of domestic global demand and a decline in investment rates. This situation of recession in the developed countries means for us in the developing countries: a quantitative decline in our exports of agricultural, mining and mineral primary commodities; an even steeper decline in prices for those primary commodities; and also a decline in our export earnings, which constitute the bulk of our financial resources. That is where our apprehensions lie.

As to the problem of the external debt of developing countries, the international context remains unfavourable.

It is precisely because of the size of the economic problems faced by Africa that the international community recognized the urgency of examining in 1986 at the thirteenth special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations the critical economic situation in Africa, which gave rise to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development 1986-1990, more commonly known as UNPAAERD.

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Today, as we take stock, we are unfortunately obliged to recognize the grim facts. The United Nations Programme of Action has not lived up to its promises, for it has done little to improve the results of the African economies. In this connection my delegation fully endorses the analysis contained in the memorandum submitted by the African ministers responsible for economic development and planning to the Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with examining and evaluating the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990.

The unsatisfactory results of that Programme will at least have enabled us to establish once and for all the fact that the question of African economic development cannot be properly dealt with without a radical solution to the continent's external debt problem. Without underestimating the importance and genuine merits of various measures and proposals designed to alleviate the debt burden of developing countries, we must nevertheless admit - and this is the position of Côte d'Ivoire - that with regard to the political situation of the African countries the problem of debt cannot be separated from that of the price of primary commodities, whether agricultural, mining or mineral products.

There can be no radical solution to the problem of our external debt, while the prices of our primary commodities remain low. Côte d'Ivoire is of the opinion that the law of supply and demand is justified in relations among countries with the same level of development, but not in relations between developed and developing countries. There can be no liberty without equality. However, between developing and developed countries there is an enormous gap. No one can maintain that liberalism exists when one side alone fixes the prices for imported raw materials, the prices for exported manufactured products, freight rates and transport and sets the conditions

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of transfer of the technology required for the industrialization of the developing countries.

Today, the low prices of primary commodities, whether agricultural, mining or mineral, are justified in economic analyses by the conventional notion of overproduction on the international market. It is our experience that there is no overproduction, but rather, that there is underconsumption owing to the high prices of finished and semi-finished products, which increases the profit margins of businesses and other middle-men.

The fundamental difference between developed and developing countries is that the former possess the necessary technology to transform our insufficiently priced primary commodities into finished products for their domestic consumption and export, whereas we, who lack that capability, are forced to export our primary commodities in a raw state, with all the disadvantages that that entails.

It would be desirable in the next few years to try to bring about an effective transfer of technology to developing countries so that the producers of primary commodities can transform a part of their production domestically, and, above all, can absorb their unemployed by creating new jobs and achieving an over-all improvement in their standard of living through an increase in household income and public funds.

The economy of Côte d'Ivoire is subject to exterior pressures created by a combination of high foreign debt and continued low prices for primary export commodities, which result in a persistent need for continued large-scale financing. Thus, on 28 May 1990 the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire approved a programme of stabilization and economic recovery, which the Government has adopted and implemented. The programme has two elements.

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The first concerns short-term financial stability to reduce and gradually eliminate the State deficit and improve the country's economic and financial environment. The second entails structural reforms aimed over the mid-term at restoring the productivity and competitiveness of the national production apparatus in order to restore the bases for economic recovery in keeping with the country's potential. The improvement of the investment climate through appropriate legislative measures as well as the deregulation of the modalities for financing economic activity are also part of this element.

In this connection the International Monetary Fund credit line of $113 million adopted on 20 September 1991 to bolster economic reform in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the $150 million loan granted on 1 October by the World Bank and designed to support the adjustment programme of Côte d'Ivoire's financial sector, are both encouraging signs for the success of the new structural reforms undertaken by our country's Government.

Here I should like to thank our international partners - the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Economic Community and the African Development Bank - with whom we have enjoyed fruitful cooperation, as well as friendly countries, foremost among them France, which have never failed to provide us with the necessary support.

We are now living in the era of international cooperation. In this connection we are witnessing North-North development and cooperation, often with a sharing of national sovereignty in various sectors. The revitalization that is now occurring within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which includes the 16 States of Western Africa, and the signature of the treaty for the creation of the African Economic Community on 3 June 1991

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at Abuja are signs of our awareness of the overwhelming need for setting up closer South-South cooperation in order to take full advantage of North-South cooperation - of course in the interest of both sides.

The imperatives of economic growth must not allow us to lose sight of another very important problem that effects all the members of the international community, whatever their level of development. I am referring to the challenge of the environment. Indeed, the constant deterioration of the environment we are witnessing every day affects developing as well as developed countries - for different reasons, of course, but with identical results.

The universality of the problem of the environment means that its solution must be sought within the framework of international cooperation based on interdependence and solidarity. That is why we place such great hopes in the forthcoming world Conference on the environment scheduled to be held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. From that Conference we expect real commitments on the part of the international community to shoulder its responsibilities in the face of environmental deterioration, particularly through massive assistance to the developing countries, in general, and in particular to the African countries, which remain the most vulnerable in the short run.

Solutions to the environment problem must not be focused solely on the symptoms but rather must try to deal with the underlying causes, keeping intersectoral relations in mind, and the repercussions ecological problems can have over several generations, for the challenge we all face at the dawn of the twenty-first century is to improve and preserve insofar as possible the quality of life on our planet.

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In conclusion, I would point out that in this interdependent world both victories and defeats are shared. At a time when democracy is everywhere coming into its own as the true expression of individual freedom, the international community has the imperative duty to assist in the effective consolidation of new democracies by resolutely attacking the true causes of the economic catastrophe the under-developed world is experiencing. I mean by resolutely attacking the question of primary-commodity prices, whether agricultural, mining or mineral - for democracy without development will engender only instability and disorder, both of which defeat the objectives of the democracy that guarantees a more stable and more secure world. Peace, as President Houphouet-Boigny often says, cannot co-exist with poverty.

We are at the dawn of a new world order. In Côte d'Ivoire, peace has become our second religion. We will spare no effort to bring forth this peace of hearts and minds. We have always given the highest priority to the right to life, that fundamental element of human rights. We therefore express the hope that the new world order will bring forth a world of peace and shared happiness.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.